THE

Witness.

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FOR THE WITNESS.

ON SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.....No. III.

ANOTHER thing which has contributed to the neglect of the oracles of God, is the conduct of the clergy. Perhaps no class of men have done more to prevent the free circulation of the Bible, than the men who professed to teach what it contained. Not only has it been represented by them as a mysterious book, but they have in times past prohibited its use among the common people altogether.

When John Wickliff published his translation of the scriptures, it met with the greatest opposition from the clergy. A certain historian thus speaks concerning it: "We find heavy complaints made by Henry Knighton, a canon of Leicester, in the neighbourhood of Dr. Wickliff, and cotemporary with him, of his finishing and publishing this translation.' 'This Master John Wickliff,' says he, 'translated out of Latin into English, the gospel, which Christ had entrusted with the *clergy and doctors* of the church, that *they* might minister it to the laity and weaker sort, according to the exigency of times and their several occasions. So that by this means, the gospel was made *vulgar*, and laid more open to the laity, and even to women who could read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of the best understanding. And so the gospel jewel or evangelical pearl was thrown about and trodden under foot of swine.' The same historian, in a note on the above, adds,

'It is one of the nostrums of the Romish church, that the faithful, whom they in contempt call the laity or the ignorant, have nothing to do to examine any doctrine in particular from its causes and grounds, and thereby to search out what is true or false; but that this they must leave to the clergy, whom they style the *masters* and *doctors* of the church, whose property they say this is.'

The same writer in another place informs us, 'In an extraordinary consistory held at Rome, A. D. 679, about British affairs, it was among other things ordained, that lessons out of the divine oracles should be always read for the edification of the churches, that the minds of the hearers might be fed with the divine word, even at the very time of their bodily repast. And indeed the first synodical prohibition or restraint of this liberty or birthright of Christians, in the use of the holy scriptures in their own language, we find was in a synod held at Thoulouse, A. D. 1228, on occasion of the doctrine and preaching of the Waldenses, that *the holy scripture is the rule of Christian faith; and that the reading and knowledge of it is free and necessary to all men, to the people as well as to the clergy.* In opposition to this principle, the synod then decreed in the following terms: *We forbid that laymen be permitted to have the books of the Old and New Testaments; unless perhaps some one out of devotion desires to have the* Psalter *or* Breviary *for divine offices, and the* hours of the blessed Virgin; *but even these they may not have translated into the vulgar tongue.*

The Bible being in a tongue unknown to the common people, since it was now in Latin only, and not very common even in that language, and the Saxonic being grown obsolete and out of use, an opinion it seems prevailed, that the knowledge of the scriptures was unnecessary, that it was not lawful for private Christians to read them in the tongue wherein they were born. Nay, to that extravagance was this whim at length carried, that one William Butler, a Franciscan friar, maintained, that 'the prelates ought not to admit of this, that every one should at his pleasure read the scriptures translated into Latin:' a paradox, which served indeed to justify or excuse many even of the priests of those times, who, as they knew nothing of the scriptures but what they found in their *Portuises* and *Missals*, so they were not able to read those portions of them with their un-

derstandings, so utterly ignorant were they even of Latin. However, it pleased God in the times of this ignorance to raise up some of a better spirit, and who had a greater regard for the dignity of human nature, as well as for the holy scriptures. In France, John Beleth, an eminent Paris divine, observed, that 'in the primitive church it was forbidden to any one to speak in an unknown tongue, unless there was some one to interpret: since it was agreeable to common sense, that it was a thing perfectly useless for a man to speak and not be understood. Hence (he said,) grew that laudable custom in some churches that after the gospel was pronounced according to the letter, or read in Latin, immediately it was explained to the people in the vulgar tongue. But, (adds he,) which confirms what is said above, *What shall we say of our times, when there is scarce any one to be found who understands what he reads or hears?*'

These quotations are a small specimen of what might be adduced, to shew how much the clergy of the Romish church have opposed the free circulation of the Bible. Prohibiting the reading of it, even in a language which was not understood, was not deemed sufficient; but they must have it entirely suppressed. Afraid that some rays of its light might be seen through the thick veil of an unknown tongue, they wisely prohibited its use altogether; knowing that the light it contained, if diffused, would discover the darkness in which they had involved the people, and that as that book was searched and appealed to, their kingdom and cause were ruined. Every channel of divine knowledge was shut up by them: the key of knowledge not only taken away, but even lost among themselves, they zealously opposed every attempt to enlighten the people.

No invention has contributed more to diffuse knowledge of every kind in the world than the art of printing. When this first began, the clergy were struck with consternation, and gnawed their tongues for pain on account of it. The historian quoted above thus informs us; 'When the art of printing was first discovered, A. D. 1457, it was not long before the Latin Bible was printed, viz. 1462, which was soon followed by other editions, whereby it was rendered more common than before. In 1488 was the Old Testament printed in Hebrew; and in less than thirty years after, the New Testament was published at Bazil in its original Greek. In

1474 was this art brought into England by William Caxton, a native, and a printing-press set up by him at Westminster. These proceedings for the advancement of learning and knowledge, especially on divine matters, alarmed the ignorant and illiterate monks, insomuch that they declaimed from the pulpits, that 'there was now a *new language* discovered, called *Greek*, of which people would beware, since it was that which produced all the heresies; that in this language was come forth a book, called the *New Testament*, which was now in every body's hands, and was full of *thorns* and *briars*; that there was also another language now started up, which they called *Hebrew*, and they who learnt it were turned *Hebrews*.'

In England, the great Erasmus tells us, his publishing the New Testament in its original language, met with a great deal of clamour and opposition, and in particular, one college in the university of Cambridge, absolutely forbade the use of it. 'These, (says he) object to us the feigned authority of synods, and magnify the great peril of the Christian faith, and the danger of the church, which they pretend to support with their shoulders, that are much fitter to prop a waggon. And these clamours they disperse among the ignorant and superstitious populace; with whom, having the reputation of being great divines, they are very loth to have their opinions called in question; and are afraid that when they quote the scripture wrong, as they often do, the authority of the *Greek* and *Hebrew* verity should be cast in their teeth, and *that* by and by appear to be a *dream*, which was by them given out for an *oracle*.' Accordingly the vicar of Croydon, in Surry, is said to have expressed himself to the following purpose, in a sermon which he preached at Paul's Cross about this time, '*We must root out printing, or printing will root out us!*'

Though we have now no prohibitions against reading the Bible, from pope, council, or clergyman, nor any bold enough to aver that the examination of doctrines, &c. belongs exclusively to the *masters* or *doctors* of the church; yet, it is to be lamented that we have some who call themselves *ambassadors* of Christ and the *successors* of the apostles. This, though not so absurd as the claims of the Romish clergy, is equally unscriptural; and, it is to be feared, has its influence on the minds of many, to prevent

their searching the scriptures. Those who believe ministers are ambassadors of Christ, and the successors of the apostles, instead of trying what they hear from them by the apostolic writings, will be led from this, to give credit to what ministers say, as if they were apostles. No minister now, has any new revelation to deliver to the world: what he says must be learned by him from the Bible, and ought to be tried by it, by all who hear him. When men claim the character of apostles, it may surely with reverence and reason be demanded of them, to produce the *signs* of apostles. Without these, we ought to reject their high claim, as calculated to turn us away from the truth which the apostles of our Lord delivered, and to turn us to fables. Reader, it becomes you implicitly to receive what the scriptures say; to increase daily in the knowledge which they contain; to hold fast this form of sound words in faith and love; to prove all you hear by them; and if any bring not the doctrine contained in them, not to receive him into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

CYPRIAN.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE WITNESS.

THE DANGER OF REJECTING CHRIST.

[Continued from No. IV. p. 149.]

"THE impostor now declares that he was called of God to see Constantinople, where he had much to do. He ships himself, to that end, in a Turkish saick, in January, 1666. He had a long and troublesome voyage; he had not power over the sea and winds. The Visier, upon the news, sends for him, and confines him in a loathsome prison. The Jews pay him their visits; and they of this city are as infatuated as those of Smyrna. They forbid traffic, and refuse to pay their debts. Some of the English merchants, not knowing how to recover their debts from the Jews, took this occasion to visit Sabatai, and make their complaints to him against his subjects; whereupon he wrote the following letter to the Jews:

'To you of the nation of the Jews, who expect the appearance of the Messias, and the salvation of Israel, peace, without end. Whereas we are informed that you are indebted to several of the English nation, it seemeth right unto us, to order you to make satisfaction to these your just debts; which if you refuse to do, and not obey us herein, know you that then you are not to enter with us into our joys and dominions.'

Sabatai remained a prisoner in Constantinople for the space of two months. The Grand Visier, designing for Candia, thought it not safe to leave him in the city during the Grand Seignior's absence and his own. He therefore removed him to the Dardanelli, a better air indeed, but yet out of the way, and consequently importing less danger to the city; which occasioned the Jews to conclude that the Turks could not or durst not take away his life; which had, they concluded, been the surest way to have removed all jealousy. The Jews flocked in great numbers to the castle where he was a prisoner; not only those that were near, but from Poland, Germany, Leghorn, Venice, and other places: they received Sabatai's blessing, and promises of advancement. The Turks made use of this confluence; they raised the price of their lodgings and provisions, and put their price upon those who desired to see Sabatai for their admittance. This profit stopped their mouths, and no complaints were for this cause sent to Adrianople.

Sabatai, in his confinement, appoints the manner of his own nativity. He commands the Jews to keep it on the ninth day of the month Ab, and to make it a day of great joy, to celebrate it with pleasing meats and drinks, with illuminations and music. He obligeth them to acknowledge the love of God, in giving them that day of consolation for the birth of their king Messias, Sabatai Sevi, his servant and first-born Son in love.

We may observe by the way the insolence of this impostor. This day was a solemn day of fasting among the Jews, formerly in memory of the burning of the temple by the Chaldees. Several other sad things happened in this month, as the Jews observe; that then and upon the same day the second temple was destroyed; and that in this month it was decreed in the wilderness that the Israelites should not enter into Canaan, &c. Sabatai was born on

this day; and, therefore, the fast must be turned to a feast; whereas, in truth it had been well for the Jews had he not been born at all; and much better for himself, as will appear from what follows.

The Jews of the city paid Sabatai Sevi great respect. They decked their synagogues with S. S. in letters of gold, and made for him in the wall a crown. They attributed the same titles and prophecies to him which we apply to our Saviour. He was also, during this imprisonment, visited by pilgrims from all parts, that had heard his story. Among whom Nehemiah Cohen, from Poland, was one, a man of great learning in the Kabbala and eastern tongues; who desired a conference with Sabatai; and at the conference maintained, that, according to the scripture, there ought to be a two-fold Messias; one the son of Ephraim, a poor and despised teacher of the law; the other the son of David, to be a conqueror. Nehemiah was content to be the former, the son of Ephraim, and to leave the glory and dignity of the latter to Sabatai. Sabatai, for what appears, did not mislike this. But here lay the ground of the quarrel: Nehemiah taught that the son of Ephraim ought to be the forerunner of the son of David, and to usher him in; and Nehemiah accused Sabatai of too great forwardness in appearing as the son of David, before the son of Ephraim had led him the way. Sabatai could not brook this doctrine; for he might fear that the son of Ephraim, who was to lead the way, might pretend to be the son of David, and so leave him in the lurch; and therefore he excluded him from any part or share in this matter; which was the occasion of the ruin of Sabatai, and all his glorious designs.

Nehemiah being disappointed, goes to Adrianople, and informs the great ministers of state against Sabatai, as a lewd and dangerous person to the government, and that it was necessary to take him out of the way. The Grand Seignior, being informed of this, sends for Sabatai, who, much dejected, appears before him. The Grand Seignior requires a miracle, and chooses one himself; and it was this: that Sabatai should be stripped naked, and set as a mark for his archers to shoot at; and, if the arrows did not pierce his flesh, he would own him to be the Messias. Sabatai had not faith enough to bear up under so great a trial. The Grand Seignior let him know that he would forthwith

impale him, and that the stake was prepared for him, unless he would turn Turk; upon which he consented to turn Mahometan, to the great confusion of the Jews. And yet some of the Jews were so vain as to affirm that it was not Sabatai himself, but his shadow, that professed the religion, and was seen in the habit of a Turk; so great was their obstinacy and infidelity, as if it were a thing impossible to convince these deluded and infatuated wretches.

After all this, several of the Jews continued to use the forms, in their public worship, prescribed by this Mahometan Messias; which obliged the principal Jews of Constantinople to send to the synagogue of Smyrna to forbid this practice. During these things, the Jews, instead of minding their trade and traffic, filled their letters with news of Sabatai their Messias, and his wonderful works. They reported, that when the Grand Seignior sent to take him, he caused all the messengers that were sent to die; and when other janizaries were sent, they all fell dead by a word from his mouth; and being requested to do it, he caused them to revive again. They added, that though the prison where Sabatai lay was barred and fastened with strong iron locks, yet he was seen to walk through the streets with a numerous train; that the shackles which were upon his neck and feet did not fall off, but were turned into gold, with which Sabatai gratified his followers. Upon the fame of these things, the Jews of Italy sent legates to Smyrna, to inquire into the truth of these matters. When the legates arrived at Smyrna, they heard of the news that Sabatai was turned Turk, to their very great confusion; but, going to visit the brother of Sabatai, he endeavoured to persuade them that Sabatai was still the true Messias; that it was not Sabatai that went about in the habit of a Turk, but his angel, or spirit; that his body was taken into heaven, and should be sent down again when God should think it a fit season. He added, that Nathan, his forerunner, who had wrought many miracles, would soon be at Smyrna; that he would reveal hidden things to them, and confirm them. But this Elias was not suffered to come into Smyrna; and though the legates saw him elsewhere, they received no satisfaction at all."

(To be continued.)

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

The ancient Independent writers have poured forth abundance of nonsense about meetings for counsel and advice. Some of them have supposed, that though Acts xv. does not afford a model for meetings of ministers to make authoritative decrees for the churches, yet that it sanctions such meetings for the purpose of giving counsel and advice to the churches. But it is not possible to explain the passage in such a manner as to establish the divine right of assemblies for advice. This meeting gave not advice, but decrees; did not submit opinions to be canvassed, but doctrines to be believed, and precepts to be observed. If it is at all a model for any foreign interference, it establishes absolute authority on the one hand, and passive and unlimited obedience on the other. I cannot see any thing that could tempt inquiring Christians to adopt this theory, except that they have not been thoroughly purged from Presbyterian prejudices, or a desire not to appear all at once to go to so great a distance from the churches of this world. Perhaps a mixture of these motives have operated with them. They are a little shocked themselves, and perhaps are afraid that others will be more so, with the idea of being so unlike to other societies called churches, in every distinguishing feature. On the contrary, I am of opinion, that we ought not to wish to hide from the churches of the world, how much we differ from them. We ought to be solicitous rather to shew them, that in every distinguishing feature the kingdom of Christ differs from the kingdoms of this world. We ought not to keep the worshippers of the beast in countenance, by making an image of the beast. There is no reason to fear alarming the prejudices of the world, or of Christians. If the cause is the Lord's, we may safely rest it upon his shoulders. If men will receive instructions from the word of God as to the nature of Christ's kingdom, it is well; but if any man will be obstinately and perversely ignorant, let him be ignorant. It is our duty to hold forth the word of life, in every part of it; it is in the Lord's hand who shall receive it. He has no need of our wisdom to help forward his plans.

But if such meetings are not instituted from this passage *jure divino*, they cannot plead it to sanction their innocency.

If they are not the offspring of the wisdom of God, they must be the offspring of the wisdom of man; and the Lord will no more countenance one human religious institution than he will another. To say that such assemblies are useful, yet not instituted, is to arraign the wisdom of Jesus, as a legislator, and to deny the competency of his institutions. If they are not divinely appointed, they cannot be useful, they cannot be innocent. I am bold to predict, that wherever they are tried, either an increasing acquaintance with the word of God, and a deeper knowledge of the nature of Christ's kingdom, will lay them aside, or they will degenerate into an engine of Satan. In the very first instance, they must tend to damp inquiry in the churches, and gradually habituate them to allow others to have the trouble of thinking for them. *Carson's Reply to Brown on Discipline.*

FOR THE WITNESS.

CRITICAL DISQUISITION ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

[Continued from No. IV. p. 175.]

THE learned have said, that before *gehenna** was used to denote hell, the Hebrew for *the house of giants* denoted it; so called on account of the giants having been swept away thither, in the anger of the Lord, by the flood. See Gen. vi. 4. When the Israelites, by their strange wanderings after the gods of surrounding nations, had incurred the displeasure of Jehovah, by the mouth of his servant Moses he declares, "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell." Deut. xxxii. 22. The word for *hell*

* This must have been early, according to the Jerusalem Targum, which supposes that the officers mentioned Gen. xxxi. 48. addressed Moses in the following manner: "Forasmuch as the Lord hath delivered the Midianites into our hands, and we have subdued their country, entered into their chambers, and seen their fair and charming daughters, taken their crowns of gold from off their heads, their rings from their ears and fingers, their bracelets from their arms, and their jewels from their necks and bosoms; therefore far be it from us to have turned our eyes towards them. We had no manner of commerce or connexion with them, lest we should thereby die the death of the wicked in *gehenna*. And let this be had in remembrance on our behalf, in the day of the *great judgment*, to make a *reconciliation* for our souls before the Lord."

here is *sheol* or *hades*, and is used hyperbolically with its adjective *lowest*, to express the greatness of the anger of the Almighty. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. "They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan." Acts vii. 41, 42, 43. When they had awfully fulfilled the prediction of Moses, Deut. xxxi. 29. under Ahab, Manasseh, and Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, they were still more given up to idolatry and hardness of heart. In succeeding times they added drunkenness to thirst, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. God pays in kind. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the works of his own hands.

That idols are a snare to those who serve them, was never, perhaps, more terribly exemplified, than in the valley of the son of Hinnom. *Gehenna*, or *Gehinnom*, from *Ge*, a *valley*, and *Hinnom*, the name of one who was once its possessor, was situated to the south-east of Jerusalem. The first mention of it in the Bible is in the book of Joshua, ch. xv. 8. It was the place where the Ammonites and apostate Israelites sacrificed or burnt their children alive to Moloch, Baal, or the Sun. The good king Josiah put an end to this horrible practice, defiling or desecrating the place by filling it with human bones, &c. 2 Kings xxiii. 10—14. From the *tophet*, or *fire-stove*, in which the children were burnt, the place or valley was also called Tophet. See Jer. vii. 32. xix. 6, 12, 13. Some think, however, that it had its name from *toph*, a *drum*, or rather *tabret*, because tabrets were beaten to drown the cries of the wretched victims.

Moloch, or Malcham, or Milcom, was the name of the god to which they sacrificed? "The Rabbins assure us that this idol was of brass, sitting upon a throne of the same metal, adorned with a royal crown, having the head of a calf, and his arms extended as if to embrace any one. When they would offer any *children* to him, they heated the statue within by a great fire; and when it was burning hot they

put within his arms the miserable victim, which was soon consumed by the violence of the heat: and that the cries of the children might not be heard, they made a great noise with drums and other instruments about the idol. Others relate that the idol was hollow, and within it were contrived seven partitions; one of which was appointed for meal or flour; in the second there were turtles; in the third, an ewe; in the fourth, a ram; in the fifth, a calf; in the sixth, an ox; and in the seventh, a *child*. All these were burned together, by heating the statue on the inside."

"It appears, from the substance of this idol, which was brass or copper, (compare Ezek. i. 7. Dan. x. 6. Rev. i. 15.); from its having the head of a calf, the animal emblem of fire; from its being divided into seven partitions, answering to the seven planetary spheres or orbits, (or according to others, having seven chapels before it); and from the horrid rites performed to it; that it was intended as a representative of the solar fire. This is further confirmed by its name, which signifies *king*: for as a king, in his political capacity, acteth where he is not, by means of others; so the solar fire, in this system doth in some sense act where it is not, by means of the light which it is continually sending forth and putting in motion. Add to this, that the apparent spring of physical action is in the *fire*."

This idol, Moloch, Cronus, or Saturn, was worshipped at Carthage, of which we have the following account, somewhat varying indeed from that above, as might be expected from the difference of the times and the places. When the Carthaginians were besieged by Agathocles, tyrant of Sicily, "they imputed this calamity to Saturn's fighting against them; for whereas they used, in former times, to sacrifice the *best* of their *own children* to this god, they had lately offered such children as they had privately purchased and brought up; and, on inquiry, some of those who had been sacrificed were found to have been supposititious. Reflecting, therefore, on these things, and seeing the enemy encamped at their very walls, they were seized with a religious dread, as having profaned those honours which their ancestors paid to the gods. In haste, then, to rectify their errors, they chose out two hundred of the noblest children, and sacrificed them publickly. Other persons, who were accused of irreligion, gave up themselves willingly, to the

number of no less than three hundred. For they had a brazen statue of Saturn, stretching out his hands towards the ground in such a manner that the child placed within them tumbled down into a pit full of fire."

The idolaters *sacrificing* their own children, particularly their first-born, thus offering the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls, is said to have originated in a perversion of the true tradition concerning the redemption of man by the *sufferings* and *death* of the great *First-born*. See 2 Kings iii. 27. xvi. 3. xxi. 6. xxiii. 10. Jer. vii. 31. xix. 5. Ezek. xxiii. 37. Mic. vi. 7. Would to God that perversions of scripture in our day might cease!

Our Saviour saith, 'Whosoever shall call his brother a fool, shall be obnoxious to the *gehenna* of fire.' Matt. v. 22. (compare Matt. xxiii. 15. James iii. 6.) and, as in Mark ix. 44. applies the words found in the last verse of Isaiah, "for their worm shall *not* die, *neither* shall their fire be quenched," obviously to express, by a strong and repeated contrast, the *intermissable* wo of the wicked after judgment. Yet, alas, for the world that lieth in the wicked one, there are who maintain that their worm *shall* die, and their fire *shall* be quenched! But behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! If they that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how muuh sorer punishment shall he be counted worthy, who tramples under foot the Son of God? In Ecclus. vii. 17. it is said, "the vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms;" and in the book of Judith, ch. xvi. 17. "Wo to the nations rising up against my kindred! the Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment, putting fire and worms in their flesh;" referring, like the other cited passages, to the worms that preyed on, and the fire which consumed, the carcasses in the valley of Hinnom. "Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king (or for Moloch or Melech, as in the original) it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle it." Isa. xxx. 33. But a place of still more abominable filthiness, pollution, and horror, is the figurative Tophet, "prepared for the devil and his angels." O ye who know the terrors of the Lord, persuade men to revere the character of Jehovah Aleim, and to flee from the wrath to come!

JOSIAH.

(To be continued.)

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN BOSTON IN 1740.

[Continued from No. III. p. 129.]

As to Mr. Whitfield's preaching; it was, in the manner, moving, earnest, winning, melting: but the mechanical influence of this, according to the usual operations of mechanical powers, in two or three days expired, with many in two or three hours; and I believe with the most as soon as the sound was over, or they got out of the house, or in the first conversation they fell into. But with the manner of his preaching, wherein he appeared to be in earnest, he delivered those vital truths which animated all our martyrs, made them triumph in flames, and led his hearers into the view of that vital, inward, active piety, which is the mere effect of the mighty and supernatural operation of a divine power on the souls of men; which only will support and carry through the sharpest trials, and make meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. His chief and earnest desires and labours appeared to be the same with the apostle Paul for the visible saints at Ephesus, viz. that they might know (i. e. by experience) what is the exceeding greatness of his power (i. e. the power of God) to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, Eph. i. And they were these things, and this sort of preaching with surprizing fervency, that the Holy Spirit was pleased to use as means to make many sensible they knew nothing of these mighty operations, nor of these vital principles within them; but that, with Simon Magus, who was a visible believer and professor of Christ and his religion, they were in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity; i. e. in the state, pollution, guilt, and power of sin, which is inexpressibly more disagreeable to the holy God than the most bitter gall to men; and will be bitterness to them, in the latter end, without a mighty change. It was by such means as these, that the Holy Spirit seized and awakened the consciences of many; and when the mechanical influence on the animal passions ceased, still continued these convictions, not only for many days, but weeks and months after the sound was over; yea, to this very day with some; while they excited others to an earnest and

persevering application to Jesus for his Spirit to quicken them, till they came to a hopeful perception of his quickening influence in them; and while in others the sovereign and offended Spirit leaving off to strive, these convictions in their consciences, the effects thereof, have either sooner or later died away.

As to Mr. Tennent's preaching; it was frequently both terrible and searching. It was often for matter justly terrible, as he according to the inspired oracles exhibited the dreadful holiness, justice, law, threatenings, truth, power, majesty of God; and his anger with rebellious, impenitent, unbelieving and Christless sinners; the awful danger they were every moment in of being struck down to hell, and damned forever; with the amazing miseries of that place of torment. But his exhibitions, both for matter and manner, fell inconceivably below the reality: and though this terrible preaching may strongly work on the animal passions and frighten the hearers, rouse the soul, and prepare the way for terrible convictions; yet those mere animal terrors, and these convictions, are quite different things.

Nothing is more obvious than for people to be greatly terrified with the apprehensions of God, eternity and hell, and yet have no convictions. As in Old England and New I have been a constant preacher and observer of the religious state of those who heard me, for above thirty years; they have passed under many scores of most dreadful tempests of thunder and lightning, wherein, as the psalmist represents, "the voice of the Lord was powerful, the voice of the Lord was full of majesty;" yea, even since the revival, viz. on Friday night, July 30th, 1742, at the lecture in the South Church, near nine of the clock, being very dark, there came on a very terrible storm of thunder and lightning; and just as the blessing was given, an amazing clap broke over the church with piercing repetitions, which set many a shrieking, and the whole assembly into great consternation; and yet in these displays of the majesty of God, and terrifying apprehensions of danger of sudden destruction, neither in this surprising night, nor in all the course of thirty years, have I scarce known any, by these kinds of terrors, brought under genuine convictions. So, on the Lord's day, June 3d last, in our time of public worship in the forenoon, when we had been about a quarter of an hour

in prayer, the mighty power of God came on with a surprising roar and earthquake; which made the house with all the galleries to rock and tremble, with such a grating noise, as if the bricks were moving out of their places to come down and bury us; which exceedingly disturbed the congregation, excited the shrieks of many, put many on flying out, and the generality in motion. But though many were greatly terrified, yet in a day or two their terrors seemed to vanish, and I know of but two or three seized by convictions on this awful occasion.

No! conviction is quite another sort of a thing. It is the work of the Spirit of God, a sovereign, free and almighty agent; wherein he gives the sinful soul such a clear and lively view of the glory of the divine sovereignty, omnipresence, holiness, justice, truth and power; the extensiveness, spirituality and strictness of his law, the binding nature, efficacy and dreadfulness of his curses; the multitude and heinousness of its sins, both of commission and omission; the horrible vileness, wickedness, perverseness and hypocrisy of the heart, with its utter impotence either rightly to repent, or believe in Christ, or change itself; so that it sees itself in a lost, undone and perishing state, without the least degree of worthiness to recommend it to the holy and righteous God, and the least degree of strength to help itself out of this condition. These discoveries are made by means of some revealed truths, either in the reading, hearing or remembrance; when in the hearing, sometimes by words of terror, and sometimes by words of tenderness; and the Holy Spirit with such internal evidence and power so applies them to the conscience, that they become as sharp arrows piercing into the heart, wounding, paining and sticking in it, when all the mechanical impressions of frightful sounds are over, sometimes for many days, weeks and months, if not years together, until this Divine Agent, by these and other convictions, agreeable to his inspired word, entirely subdues the soul to Christ, or being ungratefully treated, withdraws his convincing influence, and leaves the heart and conscience to greater and more dangerous hardness and stupidity than ever.

Such were the convictions wrought in many hundreds in this town by Mr. Tennent's searching ministry; and such was the case of many scores of several other congregations

as well as mine, who came to me and others for direction under them.* And indeed by all their converse I found, it was not so much the terror as the searching nature of his ministry, that was the principal means of their conviction. It was not merely, nor so much his laying open the terrors of the law, and wrath of God, or damnation of hell, (for this they could pretty well bear, as long as they hoped these belonged not to them, or they could easily avoid them,) as his laying open their many vain and secret shifts and refuges, counterfeit resemblances of grace, delusive and damning hopes, their utter impotence, and impending danger of destruction; whereby they found all their hopes and refuges of lies to fail them, and themselves exposed to eternal ruin, unable to help themselves, and in a lost condition. This searching preaching was both the suitable and principal means of their conviction; though it is most evident, the most proper means are utterly insufficient, and wholly depend on the sovereign will of God, to put forth his power, and apply them by this or that instrument, on this or that person, at this or that season, in this or that way or manner; with these or those permitted circumstances, infirmities, corruptions, errors, agencies, oppositions; and to what degree, duration and event he pleases.

A remarkable instance of conviction also has been sometimes under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Edwards of Northampton; a preacher of a low and moderate voice, a natural way of delivery, and without any agitation of body, or any thing else in the manner to excite attention, except his habitual and great solemnity, looking and speaking as in the presence of God, and with a weighty sense of the matter delivered. It is just as the Holy Spirit pleases, who hides occasions of pride from man; and if Mr. Tennent was to come here again, and preach more rousingly than ever, it may be, not one soul would come under conviction by him.

(To be continued.)

* The same kind of searching preaching by our own ministers and others, I also observed was the most successful means of bringing people into powerful convictions, or clear and awakening views of their sinful and lost condition, and their absolute need of Christ to find and save them.

FOR THE WITNESS.

ON CONFORMITY TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

As the apostle in one place exhorts believers to avoid conformity to the world as a duty, so in another he speaks of being made conformable to the death of Christ as the privilege of all the saints. They take the Captain of their salvation, indeed, as their example in all things; and are by no means disposed to follow even an apostle, any farther than he followed Christ. Ministers are ensamples to believers, *only* when their conversation is in heaven, that is, on heavenly things. When this is the case, their hearts will be there also; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Is a person made conformable to the death of Christ? The evidence of it will be proportionate to his nonconformity to the world. To be made conformable to his death, supposes that there was a time when it was quite otherwise with such as are in this happy state. Yes, they are ready to acknowledge that their hearts were, and still naturally are, opposed to Christ, both as to his life and his death. Many of them were once open opposers of his gospel; and all of them know, alas, by daily experience, how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin against God. So far are our hearts from being naturally conformed to Christ, that Paul (and surely no man was ever better acquainted with the Christian warfare) explicitly declares, "In me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." The carnal mind is enmity against God; his character, law, Son, gospel, and glory. To be made conformable, therefore, to the death of Christ, implies that there is a great change in us; and that this is effected not by the creature; for to be made is not to make ourselves. Hence the scriptures every where ascribe this work to supernatural agency, even the power of God. And what but infinite power could effect so great a change? But in what sense (it may be asked) are believers made conformable to his *death?* The aposle says in another place, "I am crucified with Christ." There is a striking resemblance between the death of Christ and the circumstances attending it, and the spiritual death of believers. The death of Jesus was effected by crucifixion, one of the most painful of modes: the death of believers, requires the mortification of sin, the renunciation of self right-

eousness, and including suitable views of the heinousness of sin as committed against a holy and munificent God, is also attended with an insupportable agony and distress of soul. The death of Jesus was accompanied with the greatest ignominy that inventive cruelty could devise: it was only the worst of malefactors that were crucified; but to heighten the suffering of the Ruler of Israel, every additional indignity was offered that could enter into minds full of malice and rage. In like manner, he who is crucified with Christ, bears his reproach without the camp, meets the bitter taunts and studied ridicule of a deluded world.

A disposition to suffer with Christ, and that cheerfully, is also implied. He who does not deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him, cannot be his disciple. But he who is made conformable to this death, is willing, yea, rejoices to encounter all the suffering inseparable from a profession of religion, in all its varied forms, and aggravated circumstances; and should even the king of terrors appear, he counts not his life dear to himself, being willing to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Let us not be surprised that so few publickly espouse the doctrine of the cross; and that so many are substituting something else for the religion of Jesus. It is indeed wonderful that any are made conformable to his death. His people shall be willing in the day of his power. In the cross of Christ there is a great mystery of love, of suffering, and of glory: and for the encouragement of all who are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, we are assured, that "if we be planted together with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." JUNIA.

UNITY OF FAITH THE BASIS OF UNITY OF SPIRIT.

CHRISTIANS who are united in the belief of the truth, have a right to blame those who think differently from them upon religious subjects. We often hear it said, that one man has no right to blame another, merely for differing from him in his religious sentiments. But why may not

any man, who really believes a certain doctrine of the gospel, blame another for disbelieving and denying that doctrine? The notion, that men ought not to blame one another for thinking differently upon religious subjects, is built upon the principle, that none can *really know*, that their own sentiments are *certainly right*. But this is a false principle because there is a plain and infallible rule of faith, which gives those who conform to it certain evidence of their believing the truth. And a certainty of being right in sentiment is very different from the strongest confidence of being so. Those who embrace error, may be extremely confident that they embrace the truth, and they may mistake confidence for certainty. But should they ever actually embrace the truth, they will then *know*, that their present opinion is right, and that their former one was wrong. Paul verily thought that he *knew* the truth, while he rejected the gospel; but when he really embraced the gospel, he *knew* that he *knew* the truth, and that his former opinion was a gross and dangerous error. The question among Christians is not, who are *probably*, but who are *certainly* right, in their belief of the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel? There is *certainty* to be obtained in these points, and all who have obtained it, *know* that those who differ from them in these points are certainly wrong. It is true, indeed, their knowing themselves to be right, is no proof to others that they are so; but it authorises them to say positively, that all who deny the great truths which they believe, are grossly and criminally erroneous.

Accordingly the inspired writers every where direct those, who embrace the truth, and *know* that they embrace the truth, to avoid, to condemn, and even reject all such as hold and propagate false and dangerous opinions. "Cease, my son," says Solomon, "to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Paul says to the Romans, "I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine* which ye have learned; and *avoid them*." He directs the Galatians to condemn and reject the perverters of the gospel. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed.*" And before he concludes the epistle, he adds, "I would they were even *cut off* who trouble you." The beloved and benevolent apostle John, after all his pathetic exhortations to brotherly love, expressly forbids Christians to receive, or even countenance the teachers of false doctrine. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." In these instances, the apostles appear to follow the example of their Divine Master, who solemnly warned his friends to avoid and reject false doctrines and false teachers. Whilst he was upon earth, he said, "Beware of false prophets. Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And since his ascension to heaven, he highly censured the churches in Asia, for not censuring and rejecting those, who had crept in among them, and propagated gross and fatal errors. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to conceive how it is possible for those, who are united in the belief of the truth, to obey these divine directions and admonitions, without disapproving and condemning, and, in some cases, totally excluding from their communion, such as openly deny the essential doctrines of Christianity.

If there be a propriety in God's requiring Christians to be united in the belief of the truth, then there appears to be no propriety, in attempting to unite them in *affection*, without uniting them in sentiment. Many seem to be much engaged to promote Christian union and harmony in this way. They warmly urge us, to overlook the vast variety of religious errors in the Christian world, and to unite, in affection, with all who bear the Christian name. They would have us give up the groundless hope of ever becoming united, in sentiment, and to use all our efforts, to bring about mutual love and peace among all the professors of Christianity. But is this either a proper, or lawful method, to obtain the desirable end proposed? It seems the apostle did not deem this a proper method, to remove the divisions and disputes in the church of Corinth. Instead of urging them to overlook each other's errors, and agree to differ in sentiments, he exhorted them in the name of the Lord Je-

sus Christ, to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, that then they might love as brethren, speak the same thing, and live in perfect peace. And this is the only proper way, to promote brotherly love, among any, or all denominations of Christians, upon a solid and permanent foundation. For, the brotherly love, which the gospel requires, is very different from general benevolence. We ought to feel benevolently towards all mankind, and wish well to the bitterest enemies of Christianity. But it is hard to conceive how the true believers of the gospel can exercise brotherly love to those, who appear to disbelieve and despise the precious truths, upon which they found their hopes of heaven, and in the contemplation of which they expect the happiness of heaven will chiefly consist. They can no more exercise brotherly love to such as disbelieve and deny the *essential doctrines* of the gospel, than they can exercise brotherly love to such as deny the gospel itself. Unity of faith is the only proper basis of unity of spirit. Christians may be and must be united in affection, so far as they are united in sentiment: but so far as they are disunited in sentiment, they are and must be disunited in affection. There is, therefore, no propriety, nor prospect of success, in attempting to unite the professed friends of Christ in brotherly love, without first uniting them in the belief of the same essential doctrines of the gospel. *Emmons.*

FOR THE WITNESS.

THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

Prayer has been thought so important, even by the unregenerate, that, notwithstanding the *spirit* may be wanting, yet a form may be useful in bringing men into a right understanding with God, and of inducing him to be propitious to them. In this opinion, all false professors of religion and the world at large unite. It is a fact, however, that God has no where required this exercise of any, but in the full belief of the record he has given of his Son. So far, therefore, from being *conciliated* by our prayers, they cannot be acceptably offered only upon the principle of an

unreserved concurrence with his eternal purpose. This may seem strange, and even inconsistent, to multitudes of the praying world; but I firmly believe that he who cannot reconcile this with the word of God and his own joyful experience, is yet a stranger to prayer, whatever he may think of himself, or be thought of by others.

But it is my intention in this paper to notice some of the causes which have operated to deceive mankind into an opinion, that men have a natural capacity to pray acceptably before God. In the first place, it may be observed that a great proportion of the children are very early taught a form of prayer, and perhaps a creed, which includes many expressions peculiar to a regenerate heart. This lays a foundation for the most presumptuous assumption, and which nothing but the power of recovering grace can counteract. This is a kind of early piety, taught not by the Spirit and word of God, but by parents, preceptors and clergymen, and with equal facility too, both by the Christian and the unbeliever. If, instead of putting language into the mouths of children, which is totally unappropriate, they should be instructed from the scriptures that they are guilty, helpless and condemned creatures, wholly dependent on the sovereign mercy and new-creating power of God in Christ, we should not be so likely to hear them boast a religious education, nor so violently oppose the humbling doctrines of the cross, which may be faithfully exhibited to them by the ministers of Jesus. But who can blame the youth for acting in character? If they have been led from infancy to imbibe the notion that they are redeemed by Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; that they can in common with all saints ascribe the kingdom, the power and the glory to God and the Lamb, who will be surprised at their resentment on being told, that in point of justification, they are precisely on a level with publicans and harlots? In fine, should there be half the pains taken to teach children what they are, as there is to teach them what they are not, it would require less argument to convince their understandings, that without faith it is impossible to please God, and that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified.

Another cause of deception, is the *formality* which is too common in *family worship*. Some families are daily called together to hear a prayer, as it is called, read to them;

Some to hear a form repeated from memory, with very little or no variation; and which, probably, expresses as little of the circumstances of the family, as it does of many other subjects in which they feel no particular interest. In what estimation will the children and domestics, who sicken at this spiritless periodical monotony, hold prayer? It is not possible, humanly speaking, that they should attach to it any of its appropriate excellencies. Now if it be difficult for the most lively and spiritual-minded Christian, to avoid a pernicious formality in his family devotions, so as to adapt them to the ever-changing situations of his household, what dangerous, what fatal consequences will naturally follow the heartless performances of those who are strangers to the power of godliness. Let such worshippers be assured that a mere form of words is no prayer, but a solemn mockery, for which they must render a tremendous account in the day of judgment. Christians should take care that they pray in their families so as to impress on the minds of their domestics the awful solemnity of calling on God. The nature and fitness of things, as well as scripture example, demonstrate the propriety of *short* prayers. No *solid* arguments can be offered for long prayers *on any occasion*, especially in the family. I would not prescribe for others, but it does appear to me that much the greatest portion of time allotted for family worship, should be appropriated to reading and explaining, or conversing upon the scriptures. A very few petitions, confessions and expressions of gratitude adapted to present circumstances, and connected with the portion of scriptures read, will be more impressive and useful than the most eloquent or elaborate prayer.

Prayer is a secret known to few,
And priz'd by all who ever knew
The consecrated way.
But those who never knew the Lord,
Nor have believ'd his precious word,
In vain pretend to pray.

Can men possess'd of carnal mind
Delight in things so much refin'd,
Or love a throne of grace?
As well may saints, the born of God,
Prefer to walk the downward road,
And choose the sinner's place.

Nor can the happy souls reveal
The heavenly secret. No! they feel
'Tis known to them alone.—
'Tis like the hidden manna, pure,
Or as the name forever sure
Engrav'd upon the stone.

Whate'er mistaken men may say,
The broken heart alone will pray,
And fully stand confess'd:—
For who will knock at mercy's gate
Who never saw his wretched state,
But is already bless'd?

"I thank thee, Lord," the boaster said,
"I was not like that sinner made
"Who stands with downcast eye.—
"Full oft I fast, and every day
"My many prayers with pleasure say—
"Exact, upright am I."

If men do pray, as some contend,
Who only aim their lives to mend,
But still do not believe:—
Be this *my* aim to pray in prayer,
To watch my heart with jealous care,
Lest I myself deceive.

NEHEMIAH.

(To be continued.)

THE SUBLIMITY AND PURITY OF THE GOSPEL.

IN the view of an intelligent and honest mind, the religion of Christ stands as clear of all connexion with the corruption of men, and churches, and ages, as when it was first revealed. It retains its purity, like Moses in Egypt, or Daniel in Babylon, or the Saviour of the world himself while he mingled with scribes and pharisees, or publicans and sinners. But though it thus instantly and totally separates itself from all appearance of relation to the vices of bad men, a certain degree of effort may be required in order to display it, or to view it, in an equally perfect separation from the weakness of good ones. It is not really more *identified* with the one than with the other; its sublimity is as distinct from littleness, as its purity is from vice. But it may have a vital connexion with a weak mind, while it

necessarily disowns a wicked one; and the qualities of that mind with which it unites itself, will much more seem to adhere to it, than of that with which all its principles are in total antipathy. It will be more natural to take those persons who are acknowledged the real subjects of its influence, as illustrations of its nature, than those on whom it may be charged as one of the greatest of their crimes, that they pretend to be its friends. The perception of its nature and dignity must be very vivid in the man who can observe it as intimately combined with the thoughts, affections, and language of its disciples, without losing sight for one moment of its essential qualities and lustre. No possible associations indeed can diminish the grandeur of some parts of the Christian system. The doctrine of immortality, for instance, cannot be reduced to an appearance of littleness by the meanest or most uncouth words and images that shall ever be employed to represent it. Its intrinsic majesty redeems it from the momentary depression. But there are some other points of the system which have not the same obvious philosophic sublimity. And these principles are capable of acquiring from the mental defects of their believers, such associations as will give a character very different from our common ideas of sublimity to so much as they constitute of the evangelical economy. One of the causes, therefore, which I meant to notice, as having excited in persons of taste a sentiment unfavourable to the reception of evangelical religion, is, that this is the religion of many weak and uncultivated minds.

The schools of philosophy have been composed chiefly of men of superior faculties and extensive accomplishments, who could sustain the dignity of the favourite doctrines, by the knowledge, penetration, and eloquence, which were but the common qualifications of their disciples and advocates. They could attract refined and aspiring spirits by proclaiming that the temple of *their* goddess was no rendezvous for vulgar men. On the contrary, it is the beneficent distinction of the gospel, that, notwithstanding it is of a magnitude to interest and to surpass angelic investigation, (and therefore assuredly to pour contempt on the pride of human intelligence that rejects it for its *meanness,*) it is yet most expressly sent to the class which philosophers have always despised. And a good man feels it a cause of grateful joy,

effect the happiness of multitudes, in spite of natural debility or neglected education. He is grateful to him who has "hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes," while he observes that confined capacities do not preclude the entrance, and the permanent residence, of that sacred combination of truth and power, which finds no place in the minds of many philosophers, and wits, and statesmen. But it is not to be denied that the natural consequence follows. Contracted and obscured in its abode, the inhabitant will appear, as the sun through a misty sky, with but little of its magnificence, to a man who can be content to regard the weakest mode of displaying itself to which it can be reduced, as the noblest to which it can be elevated. In taking such a dwelling, the religion seems to imitate what was prophesied of its author, that, when he should be seen, there would be no beauty that he should be desired. This humiliation is inevitable; for unless miracles are wrought, to impart to the less intellectual disciples an enlarged power of thinking, the evangelic truth must accommodate itself to the dimensions and unrefined habitudes of their minds. And perhaps the exhibitions of it will come forth with more of the character of those minds than of its own celestial distinctions: insomuch that if there were no declaration of the sacred system, but in the forms of conception and language in which they declare it, even a very candid man might hesitate to admit it as the most glorious gift of heaven. Happily, he finds the subject imparted by other oracles; but while from them he receives it in its own character, he is tempted to wish he could detach it from all the associations which he feels it has acquired from the humbler exhibition. And he does not greatly wonder that other men of the same intellectual habits, and with a less candid and profound solicitude to receive with simplicity every thing that really comes from God, should have admitted a very injurious impression from these associations.

They would not make this impression on a man already devoted to the religion of Jesus Christ. No great passion is ever cooled by any thing which can be associated with its object, while that object itself continues unaltered. The passion is even willing to verify its power, and the merit of that which interests it, by sometimes letting the unpleasing but spiritual devotions and moral instructions, for which

associations surround and touch the object for an instant, and then chasing them away; and it welcomes with augmented attachment that object coming forth from them unstained; as happy spirits at the last day will receive with joy their bodies recovered from the dust in a state of purity that will leave every thing belonging to the dust behind. *Foster's Essays.*

THE WORLD RULED BY NAMES.

I HAVE met with the observation, though I do not at present recollect where, that the world is ruled by names. It matters not who said so: but experience shows us, that there is more truth in the remark than any one at first hearing would be apt to imagine. When names are first assigned to offices, or even to orders of men, there is commonly an association of ideas, favourable or unfavourable in some respect or other, which is derived from the more ancient to the more recent application of the term. And even if the term should be coined for the occasion, the materials whence it is taken, that is, the known etymology, produces the same effect. It invariably gives rise to certain associations; these influence opinion, and opinion governs practice. We have seen the tendency which the distinction of mankind into clergy and laity had, to heighten, in the minds of the populace, (that is, more than nine-tenths of the people) the reverence for the sacred order. The effect thus actually produced, in ignorant ages, through the arrogance of the one side, and the superstition of the other, is sufficiently manifest, and perfectly astonishing. I shall proceed to take notice of the consequences of some other innovations in the style adopted on these subjects.

A close resemblance, both in titles and functions, to the Jewish priesthood, came soon to be very much affected by the pastors of the church. The very names of high-priest, priest, and Levite, which the inspired writers had never once applied to any class of ministers, ordinary or extraordinary, in the Christian commonwealth, appeared to have a wonderful fascination in them, that rendered them incomparably superiour to any appellations which Jesus Christ, or his that a communication has come from heaven, adapted to

apostles, had thought fit to bestow. Beside the fancied dignity, the sacerdotal titles had been always understood to convey the notion of certain rights, which conduced both to the honour, and to the emolument, of those to whom these titles belonged. Now having availed themselves of the supposed analogy, they thought they had the best right in the world to extend their claims much further; arguing, that because the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, were the high-priests, priests, and Levites, of a superiour, a more heavenly and spiritual dispensation, they ought to possess more of the unrighteous mammon, that is, more earthly treasure, and greater temporal power. And, what is still more extraordinary, by such wretched reasoning the bulk of mankind were convinced.

It is worth while to remark the great difference between the style adopted by the apostles, in relation to all sacred matters, and that which, in the course of a few ages, crept into the church, and even became universal in it. Under the Mosaic economy, which exacted the rigid observance of a burdensome ritual, the only place devoted to the ceremonial and temporary service, consisting in sacrifices and oblations, ablutions, aspersions, and perfumes, was the temple of Jerusalem, for no where else could the public ceremonies be lawfully performed. The places that were dedicated to what may be called comparatively the moral and unchangeable part of the service, consisting in prayers and thanksgivings, and instructive lessons from the law and the prophets, were the synagogues, which, as they were under no limitation, in point of number, time, or place, might be built in any city, or village, where a suitable congregation of worshippers could be found; not only in Judea, but wherever the Jewish nation was dispersed, and that even though their temple and their polity should subsist no longer. The ceremonies of the law being represented in the gospel as but the shadows of the spiritual good things disclosed by the latter, and its corporal purifications, and other rites, as the weak and beggarly elements, intended to serve but for a time, and to be instrumental in ushering a more divine and rational dispensation, it was no wonder that they borrowed no names from the priesthood, to denote the Christian ministry, or from the parade of the temple-service, much calculated to dazzle the senses, to express the simple

the disciples of Jesus assembled under the humble roof of one of their brethren. On the contrary, in the name they gave to the sacred offices, as well as to other things, regarding their religious observances, they showed more attention to the service of the synagogue, as in every respect more analogous to the reasonable service required by the gospel. The place where they met is once, James ii. 2, called a synagogue, but never a temple. "If there come into your assembly," *eis tēn synagōgēn 'umōn.* And it is well known, that the names teacher, elder, overseer, attendant, or minister, and even angel, or messenger, of the congregation, were, in relation to the ministry of the Jewish synagogue, in current use.

When we consider this frequent recourse to terms of the one kind, and this uniform avoidance of those of the other; and when at the same time we consider how much the sacred writers were inured to all the names relating to the sacerdotal functions, and how obvious the application must have been, if it had been proper; it is impossible to conceive this conduct as arising from any accidental circumstance. We are compelled to say with Grotius, (De imperio sum. Potest. cap. ii. 5,) "Non de nihilo est, quod ab eo loquendi genere, et Christus ipse, et apostoli semper abstinuerunt." It is indeed most natural to conclude, that it must have sprung from a sense of the unsuitableness of such an use to this divine economy, which, like its author, "is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." I may add, it must have sprung from a conviction, that such an application might mislead the unwary into misapprehensions of the nature of the evangelical law.

In it Jesus Christ is represented as our only priest; and as he ever liveth to make intercession for us, his priesthood is unchangeable, untransmissive, and eternal. A priest is a mediator between God and man. Now we are taught, in this divine economy, that as there is one God, so there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. The union of the mediatorship, and consequently of the priesthood, in the strictest sense of the word, is as really an article of our religion as the unity of the Godhead. I do not deny, that in a looser sense every minister of religion may be called a mediator, or, if you please, a priest; inas-

much as he is the mouth of the congregation, in presenting their prayers to God, and is, as it were, also the mouth of God, on whose part he admonishes the people. The great reason against innovating by the introduction of these names is, not because the names are in no sense applicable, (that is not pretended;) but because, first, they are unnecessary; secondly, their former application must unavoidably create misapprehensions concerning the nature of the evangelical ministry; and thirdly, because the inspired penmen of the New Testament, who best understood the nature of that ministry, never did apply to it those names.

But to return—the only proper sacrifice, under the new covenant, to which all the sacrifices of the old pointed, and in which they were consummated, is the death of Christ. This, as it cannot, like the legal sacrifices, be repeated, neither requires nor admits any supplement. "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Sometimes, indeed, in regard to the Mosaic institution, an allegorical style is adopted, wherein all Christians are represented as priests, being, as it were, in baptism,* consecrated to the service of God, the community as a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to him, the bodies of Christians as temples destined for the habitation of God through the Spirit. The oblations are thanksgivings, prayer, and praise. The same name is also given to acts of beneficence and mercy. "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This is also the manner of the earliest fathers. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, after mentioning Christ as our all-sufficient high-priest, insists, that in consequence of our Christian vocation, we, his disciples, not the pastors exclusively, are God's true sacerdotal family. *Emeis archieratikon, to alēthinon genos esmen tou Theou.* In this allusive way, also, the terms circumcision, passover, unleavened bread, altar, sabbath, and the like, are sometimes allegorically applied by the sacred penmen. But no where are the terms high-priest, priest, or Levite, applied particularly to the ministers of Christ.

Doctor Hickes, a zealous asserter of what he calls the Christian priesthood, has a wonderful method of solving

* Many of our readers will concur with us in differing from this sentiment. *Editors.*

this difficulty. He supposes, that Christ and his apostles acted the politicians in this particular. According to him, they were afraid, that with all the miracles and supernatural gifts they could boast, it was an undertaking too bold to be hazarded, to appear as rivals to the Jewish priests. Here he inadvertently ascribes a conduct to Jesus Christ, which, in my apprehension, reflects not a little on the sincerity of that spotless character. "As a Jew," says he, (Let. I. chap. iii. § 1.) "he was to observe the law and the temple worship, and live in communion with the Jews; which, though he could do as a king and a prophet, yet he could not do it with congruity, had he declared himself to be their sovereign pontiff, that very high-priest, of which Aaron himself was but a type and shadow." But allow me to ask, Why could he not? Was it because there was a real incongruity betwixt his conforming to the Jewish worship, and his character of high-priest? If there was, he acted incongruously, for he did conform; and all he attained by not declaring himself a priest, was not to avoid, but to dissemble, this incongruity. And if there was none in conforming, where was the incongruity in avowing a conduct which was in itself congruous and defensible? We are therefore forced to conclude, from this passage, either that our Lord acted incongruously, and was forced to recur to dissimulation to conceal it, or that Doctor Hickes argues very inconsequentially. The true Christian can be at no loss to determine which side of the alternative he ought to adopt.

But to consider a little the hypothesis itself, the apostles might boldly, it seems, and without such offence as could endanger the cause, call their master the Messiah, the King, (a name with the Jews above every other human title.) They might, in this respect, say safely, that though their chief priests and rulers had killed the Lord of life, God had raised him from the dead; nay, had done more, had exalted him to his own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to the people, and remission of sins. They might thus openly, if not put him in the place of the priest, put him in the place of the Almighty, to whom the priests are bound to minister, and from whom ultimately all the blessings must be obtained; nay, and represent his power as more extensive in procuring divine forgiveness and favour, (the great object of all their sacrifices) than any that had

ever been experienced through the observance of the Mosaic rites; inasmuch as "by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." Yet, says the doctor, they durst not call him priest. Now we know that the usurping of this title was not, by the Jewish institute, either treason or blasphemy; whereas, the titles and attributes, which the apostles gave their master, were accounted both treasonable and blasphemous by the unbelieving Jews, and with too much appearance of truth, if Jesus had been the impostor they imagined him; for the disciples set him in their representations above every thing that is named, either in the heaven, or upon the earth. I might say further, Did the first preachers hesitate to maintain the cause of their master, notwithstanding that by implication it charged the guilt of his blood on the chief priests and rulers, as those rulers themselves but too plainly perceived? But why do I say by implication? They often most explicitly charged them with this atrocious guilt. It was in the midst of the sanhedrim that Stephen boldly said, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them who shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." Might they thus with safety to the cause, at least, though not with impunity to their persons, exhibit those priests as homicides, parricides, regicides, and, if I may be allowed a bold expression, even deicides; and yet durst not, without involving the whole in one general ruin, so much as insinuate that they also had their priests? Credat Judæus Apella.

In short, the whole pretext of this learned doctor is precisely as if one should say, that if in a country like this, for instance, one were to raise a rebellion in favour of a pretender to the crown, the partisans might, with comparatively little danger or offence, style the sovereign in possession a tyrant and usurper, and proclaim the man they would set up, king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, and even add, defender of the faith. But it would be imminently hazardous, and would probably ruin the cause, to insinuate that he had the patronage of any ecclesiastic benefices. They may with safety denominate him the head of the church, and of the law, the source of all honours and authority in the state, and even give him higher titles than

ever monarch had enjoyed before; they may assume to themselves the names of all sorts of offices, civil or military, under him; but if they would avoid inevitable perdition, let them not style any of themselves his chaplains. In fact, the absurdity here is not equal to the former.

Campbell's Lectures.

FOR THE WITNESS.

ON LUKEWARMNESS.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Rev. iii. 15, 16.

What can be more culpable than a lukewarm spirit in religion? To be frigid and indifferent in our devotions is a crime akin to atheism: for who, believing in the existence, sovereignty and goodness of God, a God in Christ, can approach such a being with languor? He who can, by no means evinces his love or his knowledge of the truth, but has too much reason to call in question his former experience. It is this spirit which destroys the distinction between the true and the pretended, the spiritual and the merely rational worship of Jehovah. And it is by no means certain, but many who once appeared to pray and perhaps preach too with fervour, having lost the heat which animated their first devotions, and having settled down into a "calm and rational piety," never knew the great secret of drawing near to God.

It may be profitable to consider some of the *signs* of a lukewarm spirit. Neglect of self-examination and the want of a watchful disposition; of frequent private meditation and prayer; a preference of worldly to religious conversation; a backwardness in the cause of evangelical truth; inattention to searching the scriptures; a laxity in public duties, or a fondness for new doctrines. And this is sometimes the effect of an unfaithful ministry; or worldly prosperity; or the undue influence of relations and acquaintances; or a criminal neglect of that fraternal intercourse which ought to mark the followers of the Lamb; or a

fond attachment to some favourite system, which, though it may in itself be sound, can never communicate the fire of spiritual devotion. How useless, if nothing worse, are such members of the church! How incompatible with the nature of the gospel, and dishonorary to the blessed Jesus, of whom the poet could justly say,

> Cold mountains and the midnight air
> Witness'd the fervour of his prayer.

Think, O lukewarm professor, of the frequency, the ardour, and the power of His prayers, who needed nothing for himself, but sought and obtained all good things for his people! Think of his agonizing prayer in the garden—of his excruciating sufferings and his ignominious death on the cross, and if your heart be not as stone it must break. Can it be possible, let us all ask, to possess the Spirit of Christ, and, for any considerable length of time, draw near to him with our lips only? O what an example would this be! what a cause of stumbling to those who have no religion! How unlike our blessed Master! how unlike the primitive saints! yea, how unlike the enemies of truth themselves, whose ingenuity, zeal and perseverance have too well succeeded even in corrupting the people of God! If we were alive, and earnestly engaged in the cause of Immanuel, our prayers would be frequent, spiritual, and appropriate; our attendance on public ordinances, punctual and devout; our obedience to all things commanded, conscientious and impartial; our stability in the faith, firm and unshaken; our lives, exemplary and irreproachable; and our influence, salutary to all around. But, alas, the reverse of this is very frequently seen! With some, it would seem to be unpardonable, to appear deeply and constantly engaged in heavenly things. A man may pursue the path to riches and honours, and enter with his whole soul into the things of this world; he may rise early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, to effect earthly purposes; he may manifest decision and zeal in political debate, and be approved, esteemed and caressed: but if, in the concerns of eternity, he should discover half the interest and constancy, he is sure to be branded as an enthusiast, or perhaps as a fool. Professed follower of Jesus! try yourself by his life, example, and commands. Vain are your

pretensions to friendship with him, if your attachment to his cause be not superiour to every other. In such a cause you cannot remain indifferent or lukewarm, and retain a comfortable evidence of the saving knowledge of a crucified Saviour.

PETER.

ANECDOTE OF CALVIN.

AT a time when the foulest abuse is poured on the memory of the excellent Calvin, it may be proper to insert the following anecdote, which does much honour to his moral and religious character; and is a curious historical fact, which deserves to be generally known. It was related at Geneva, by Deodati, one of Calvin's successors, to the first Lord Orrery, who flourished under the reign of Charles the First. The extract is taken from 'The State Letters and Memoirs of the Right Hon. Roger Boyle,' page 4, 5.

'Eckius* being sent by the pope, legate into France, upon his return resolved to take Geneva in his way, on purpose to see Calvin; and if occasion were, to attempt reducing him to the Roman church. Therefore, when Eckius was come within a league of Geneva, he left his retinue there, and went, accompanied but with one man, to the city in the forenoon. Setting up his horses at an inn, he inquired where Calvin lived: whose house being shown him, he knocked at the door: and Calvin himself came to open it to him. Eckius inquiring for Mr. Calvin, he was told he was the person. Eckius acquainted him that he was a stranger: and having heard much of his fame, was come to wait upon him. Calvin invited him to come in; and he entered the house with him; where, discoursing of many things concerning religion, Eckius perceived Calvin to be an ingenuous learned man, and desired to know if he had not a garden to walk in: to which Calvin replying he had, they both went into it; and there Eckius began to

* Eckius was a very learned divine, professor in the university of Ingolstadt; memorable for his opposition to Luther, Melancthon, and other reformers in Germany. He died in 1543, aged 57. See Hoffmanni Lexicon, Tom. 2, page 130, or Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. vi. page 296.

inquire of him why he left the Roman church, and offered him some arguments to persuade him to return; but Calvin could by no means be inclined to think of it. At last, Eckius told him that he would put his life in his hands; and then said he was Eckius the pope's legate. At this discovery, Calvin was not a little surprised; and begged his pardon that he had not treated him with the respect which was due to his quality. Eckius returned the compliment; and told him if he would come back to the Roman church, he would certainly procure for him a cardinal's cap. But Calvin was not to be moved by such an offer. Eckius then asked what revenue he had: he told the Cardinal he had that house and garden, and fifty livres per annum, beside an annual present of some wine and corn; on which he lived very contentedly. Eckius told him that a man of his parts deserved a greater revenue s and then renewed his invitation to come over to the Romish church, promising him a better stipend if he would. But Calvin giving him thanks, assured him he was well satisfied with his condition. About this time dinner was ready; when he entertained his guest as well as he could, excused the defects of it, and paid him great respect. Eckius, after dinner, desired to know if he might not be admitted to see the church, which anciently was the cathedral of the city. Calvin very readily answered that he might; accordingly, he sent to the officers to be ready with the keys, and desired some of the syndicts to be there present, not acquainting them who the stranger was. As soon, therefore, as it was convenient, they both went towards the church; and as Eckius was coming out of Calvin's house, he drew out a purse, with about one hundred pistoles, and presented it to Calvin; but Calvin desired to be excused: Eckius told him, he gave it to him to buy books, as well as to express his respect for him. Calvin with much regret took the purse; and they proceeded to the church, where the syndicts and officers waited upon them; at the sight of whom Eckius thought he had been betrayed, and whispered his thoughts into Calvin's ear; but Calvin assured him to the contrary. Thereupon they went into the church; and Eckius, having seen all, told Calvin he did not expect to find things in so decent an order, having been told to the contrary. After having taken a full view of every thing,

Eckius was returning out of the church; but Calvin stopped him a little, and calling the snydicts and officers together, took out the purse of gold which Eckius had given him, telling them that he had received that gold from this worthy stranger, and that now he gave it to the poor; and so put it all into the poor-box that was kept there. The syndicts thanked the stranger; and Eckius admired the charity and modesty of Calvin. When they were come out of the church, Calvin invited Eckius again to his house; but he replied that he must depart; so thanking him for all his civilities, offered to take his leave. But Calvin waited upon him to the inn, and walked with him a mile out of the territories of Geneva, where, with great compliments, they took a farewell of each other.'

ANECDOTE OF DR. GILL.

THE learned Dr. Gill was once preaching on human inability, when a gentleman present was much offended, and took him to task for degrading human nature. "Sir," said the doctor, "do you think men can contribute to their own conversion?" He enumerated a variety of particulars. "And have you done all this?" said the doctor. "Why, I can't say I have yet; but I hope I shall begin soon." "If you have these things in your power," said the doctor, "and have not done them, you most certainly deserve to be damned, and are but illy qualified to be an advocate for free will, which has done you so little good."

FOR THE WITNESS.

TO QUARTUS.

You rightly observe, brother, that more ordinances of the gospel than one are too generally either neglected or grossly perverted. The evil that you complain of as one particular cause, namely, false profession, is serious indeed, and that on several accounts. It conduces not a little to cherish the pride and hypocrisy of the human heart; it gratifies the vanity of that class of men who have usually,

and not inaptly, been denominated the privileged order; and it has, perhaps always, occupied considerable room in the polity of civilized nations: so that having become deep and inveterate by habit and prescription, it subserves in an amazing degree the devices of him, who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

It once seemed good to the pope to issue a bull, declaring, that he and the Holy Ghost acknowledged the Americans to be of the human race. In the council of Lima, in the year 1583, it was contended that the same people were unfit to come to the sacraments because of their ignorance. No doubt the pope was fulfilling his office, and the men of the council were quite in earnest in their discussions. The bright era of the pilgrims to which you refer, and which is commonly considered as important as the vocation of the patriarch Abraham, rescued the country from such contempt; but then what was substituted? The pilgrims seem to have aimed at a theocratical, or rather an autocratical government; and they certainly shewed such extreme solicitude about their posterity, that it would be ungrateful not to adopt of their maxims. It is a great pity, however, that men do not pay less attention to the fathers, whether Papist or Protestant, and more to the Bible. Luther is frequently and justly styled a luminary of the Reformation; but will not a mind duly concerned for the maintenance of the purity of the gospel ordinances lament, that while he refused to admit that the bread and wine in the eucharist ceased to be those substances when changed into Christ's body by consecration from a priest, he should advance the dogma, that these remained still bread and wine after having undergone this change? The Lutherans,* however, who, like others, are much the children of habit, believe in the *real* presence to this day. Was the remove from transubstantiation to consubstantiation of advantage to Christianity? Just as much was gained as in the setting aside of sponsors for children in christening to make room for the independence of Christian babes.

* 'You know,' said one of them, conversing with me not long ago, 'that Christ said, "*This* is my body:"' but he was unwilling to interpret in the same way, the metaphor in the passage, "on this *rock* I will build my church,"—and why? Because he had not been accustomed to do so.

What pride, what prejudices, what hypocrisy, does the systematic proselyting of mankind engender! Born in a Christian land, the profligate and the religious dissembler are alike entitled at least to Christian baptism, Christian matrimony, Christian burial;—except, indeed, in those popish countries where a yard or two of consecrated earth is not to be obtained even for *money* by a heretic. Scarce has an infant had time to look about it among the superstitions of our world, before it is initiated into religion. As its mind expands, its parents, who had undergone the same process, (and people are not a little partial to the incidents of their childhood) catechise it according to their received notions, however these may differ from the truth of the scriptures. At the same time, we must not forget to give it prayers composed by Dr. Somebody, and accustom it to consider *every* voice from the pulpit as an oracle, deserving at least equal attention with the Bible. However the Babylonish garments of the minister, and other superfluous externals, may contravene gospel simplicity, children will seldom grow up to dislike these, while they are used to them. By and by the Christian becomes old enough to *renew his covenant*; to give his voice, on occasion, for the choice of what Cowper might call a parish dry nurse, and a greater than Cowper, a ravening wolf; and if moral conduct be suitable, and he *have no objection*, to partake of the communion. Dreadful profanation! "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" In his turn, this fashionable saint tells his progeny how far he can trace a pious pedigree; and having a pretty good recollection of the fine things he has done, though but little knowledge of the Bible, he at length draws near the close of life. In his last moments he sends for his minister: and because the prayer of a righteous man (that is, a minister,) availeth much, he uses this benefit of the clergy, and a stranger to the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb sinks into the eternal world. Is not this a pharisee? or is it a brand plucked from the fire, a sinner saved by grace?

Members of churches (falsely so called) are going to hell in crowds; and it is surely high time for the faithful in Christ Jesus to awake out of sleep. The divine truths,

"Godliness is profitable unto all things," and "I was a stranger, and ye took me in," if the conduct of many honoured professors be correct, have entirely changed their meaning. If a man be sober, decent, pay his way, as it is phrased, be generally considered by the world respectable; if he be a man of property and sometimes untie the purse-strings for the relief of the sons and daughters of distress, subscribe pretty liberally to any charitable institution, and enter a church (no matter how, whether like a thief or robber, or whatever way he gain admittance there) if he meet the common claims of society, keep his books straight, and now and then socially and convivially entertain his neighbours, occasionally inviting his minister and deacons;—behold the generous, the clever, behold the godly man: yea, if he fulfil these to the acceptance of the world in general, and to the world's church in particular, he may laugh with impunity at the fundamentals of the Christian religion; he may jest with the record God hath given of his Son; he may ridicule the doctrine of the new birth; tell you that however the scriptures may be understood, it is an absurdity to admit that the second person in the Trinity (as men speak) is as old as the first; he may exalt his own carnal reasonings against the plain declarations of the holy scriptures, and thus blaspheme the God of grace, through whose long-suffering he is sustained in being, and permitted to belch out his poison. Is this colouring too high? No; his conduct in life keeps pace with it: he may negociate the most villainous business, provided he have the sanction of usage or custom; he may live in the secret violation of the commands of God, and be listened to with indifference while gravely asserting that it signifies not what theological tenets may form his creed, so long as he quadrates his conduct by what he thinks to be, on the whole, the intent of the rules of scripture; as if principle affected not practice, or an action must not be estimated by its motive. O profession, profession! how dost thou foster the pride and vanity of thy dupes, and render the word of God of no effect by thy traditions!

The abused peculiar profession of the clergy admirably contributes to the support of worldly churches. There are many who pity the pagans, paying attention to their tutelar deities, and the Romists, to their canonized saints, who repose simi-

lar confidence in their own ministers, or rather intercessors. A more undue influence on the minds of men cannot be exercised, than proceeds from some "who cannot teach and will not learn;" but *professing* to teach, merely dogmatize and pretend. Making every necessary allowance, what a contrast is there in the characters of the ambassadors commissioned by the Head of the church, and those who now-a-days pretend to the same office! If one of the former was persecuted in one city, he was to flee into another. One of the latter, having obtained his parish, must not spurn the hands that feed him, but consult the dispositions of his charge as to what will be agreeable; and hence the employment of teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Should the ears of any of the members of his church tingle, to hear him read the requisite qualifications of the sacred office, "fit to teach," "not covetous," &c. and feel inclined to investigate and compare, he will be pronounced obnoxious to perdition in the gainsaying of Core. Few people are destitute of candour enough to acknowledge, that they have been accustomed from early childhood, not merely to esteem ecclesiastics highly for their work's sake, for their labours of love; but to regard them as a superior order of men, on whose shoulders rests the care of the souls which are in their respective neighbourhoods. If, again, some of the hireling shepherd's flock have been induced to search the scriptures, and by divine grace have been made to discover that it is an awful thing to be unequally yoked with unbelievers; that immersion only is the mode of baptism; that the cup of blessing, which is indeed blessed, is alone the *communion* of the Lord—Ring the bells, the church is in danger! Schismatics! Covenant-breakers! To your tents, O Israel!

Civil governors have ever availed themselves of religion, of one kind or other, to restrain the lawless passions of the multitude. The illicit connexion of church and state in countries called Christian, has furnished the infidel with an argument that he might have gnashed his teeth to find in real Christianity. "My kingdom," saith Immanuel, "is not of this world." "The world hateth me." A certain writer in high life, conversant in the affairs of the principal courts of the world, complacently remarks (if memory serve

me) that the court of the Turks,* like that of every European nation, are deists. Is that astonishing? what saith the scripture? "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," &c. But the Regulator of the destinies of men could also elevate a pious cast-away brother to the court of Pharaoh, a shepherd boy to the throne of Israel, and display the riches of his grace in Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor. Perish, then, the thoughts that great men are always wise, and that good men are never great. It would be amusing, if it were not deplorable, to see numbers stretching out the hand like Uzza of old, to save the ark of God, through their deep concern for the welfare of the community; helping the priests by professing religion, because it is necessary to keep the inferior ranks subordinate. Priestcraft, let infidels know, is as odious as their own character in the sight of Jehovah; and therefore they will have leisure for consideration how matters stand at home. The church which owes its existence and support to the government, *in any degree*, is not that against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. How greatly are the manners of the people of any country influenced by its form of government! Whether Herod or Pilate become governor, therefore, if religion be used as an engine of reformation, it is impossible that the people should not become religionists. It is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men. The Republican form of government is most unfavorable to establishments; yet may the minds of well-meaning citizens be visited with the influence of mock religion. The motley worship of what is called prayer and praise with a frothy political oration, railing at the factions of the day, is an abominable oblation to the Lord God of Sabaoth. No less revolting is it to the mind that desires the church to be built according to the New Testament, according to the pattern shewn in the mount, to observe men paying by installments, as it were, their passage to heaven, by giving periodically their quota of dollars to support the gospel. The servant of Jesus Christ is a more dignified character than the pauper of a parish, though the latter

* At that time this writer resided in Turkey.

might possibly look with sovereign contempt on a heap of fishing tackle or tent-maker's tools. It is suspected, that the son of the carpenter (I speak it reverently) has thousands of professing followers merely on account of their rulers having professed to believe on him. But woe unto the idol shepherds who run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward!

With these helps, my brother, he must have been very indocile, very obstinate indeed, that has not made more or less proficiency in learning the language of the hypocrite. When a person finds it difficult to see how his character differs from that of the Christian, he will easily conclude that he is one already, though he is puzzled to know when the change happened. Accordingly, it is not uncommon for the wise and prudent obliquely to hint, on hearing the experience of a convert, that their lives have been so uniform and regular, that it is not so much to be wondered at that they have not known such emotions of grief, remorse, and succeeding joy. What! are these washed in the blood of Christ?

Why was Esau called *profane?* Because in slighting his birthright, he slighted what was typical of him who was to be the first-born of many brethren; despised the love of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and also contemned the eternal *inheritance* itself. Is that character unlike, who professes to know the grace of God, yet offers frivolous excuses for corrupt communion, while he sees men posting with a lie in their right hand to the pit of eternal despair? But by coming out from among the unbelievers, he would influence others inquiring the way to Zion to relax; or he would be prevented from doing good to the souls of his ungodly yoke-mates, and also deprive the *real* Christians of a part of their fellowship; or he would outrage the feelings of his kindred according to the flesh, offend his friends, and injure his family. He knows that there is such a thing as a church within a church, &c. &c. How ungraciously do such expressions drop from lips professing love to the Lord Jesus! Has the divine Redeemer left us at liberty to consider ourselves our own? or to do evil that good may come? or to confer with flesh and blood? or to seek *last* the kingdom of God and his righteousness? or, in fine, to distrust his providence? Come ye out from among the unbelievers, touch not the unclean

thing, be ye separate, saith the Lord, &c. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. Fear not them that can kill the body; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Trust in the Lord Jehovah; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

Having thus pursued your subject, and glanced at the present state of many churches called Christian, I beseech you, brother, rather than mention any other causes of this evil at present, to "shew to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings-out thereof, and the comings-in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof; and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." In the mean time let us consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; whose house are we, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end. PHILOLOGUS.

OF ARBITRATION IN RELIGION.

[Extracted from a late European author.]

In all human references, the parties who make the reference are supposed to be determined to settle the matter of dispute by the judgment of the referees, whether they themselves should be convinced or not. If they must both be convinced, reference is useless. It is then not a reference for decision, but a reference for opinion. But in matters of religious opinion, which cannot be received or given up, but with full conviction, there is no room for reference to any but infallible referees. The decision of fallible men cannot change the mind of either party, any further than they convince the judgment by argument. Nay, even about civil matters, parties referring a case, and engaging to abide by the decision of the arbitrators, do not oblige themselves to change their opinions; for

this they could not do. If my neighbour and I have a dispute about property, we may leave it to a reference, and doing so we ought to be finally decided by their opinion, though it is very possible that the arbitration may not be strictly pleasing to either of us. But we cannot do so with respect to religious matters; if we are not convinced by the arbitration, it is sinful to obey it. I may give away my civil property agreeable to the decision of men, although I may be convinced that there is no just claim to demand it. "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also," *i. e.* as I take it, when any man brings a legal process against us, and carries his point by the laws of the land, we are to give up to that authority, although we are convinced that the judges have been partial or mistaken. We are not to suppose, that because we are convinced that the decision has been unjust, we are therefore warranted to resist the civil powers, and refuse compliance. Nay, if our adversary brings another process as unjust as the former, and carries it by the opinion of the legal judges of the land, we are to submit to that also. Here then is not only a warrant, but a divine command, to submit to the judgment of those legally authorized, although we are not convinced of its justice. But can you produce any such command as to religious matters? Does the Lord Jesus tell his disciples to submit in the same manner to the judgment of uninspired church-rulers? And if there was any such assembly of uninspired men commissioned by Jesus to settle religious controversies, would he not give us some instructions with respect to the extent of their authority and of our obedience? Would he be so particular in shewing us our duty to the laws of the land in which we live, and say nothing about our duty to the laws of these assemblies? Though in civil matters Jesus commands us to be amenable to the decision of the lawful judges of the land, yet he does not command us to believe that their judgment is always equitable. How absurd it is then to suppose, that parties having a difference in religious sentiments should leave it to the determination of fallible men, and engage to act accordingly! The very engagement to do so would be perjury; for they may not be convinced, and it is a first principle in the law of Christ, hat no one is to act contrary to his convictions.

INTERESTING FRAGMENTS.

THAT any of mankind are self-righteous, is because they are, at heart, altogether unrighteous. That any hope or wish to be accepted of God as righteous persons, on the ground of their own goodness, is because they are totally selfish, and have no impartiality. The moment one becomes upright, in the lowest degree, he condemns himself; and flees for refuge to free grace, reigning through the righteousness of Christ, as his only support from utter despair. Nor does he ever after build his hope of being justified, on any other foundation. *Smalley.*

Faith is entirely distinct from the righteousness which justifies; at the same time it is indispensably necessary, answering great and good purposes. Under its influence, the sinner flies to Jesus, the hope set before him, and trusts his immortal interest in his hands, being perfectly satisfied with his adorable character. Faith is also the medium of peace and consolation. You may with equal propriety attempt to separate light and heat from the sun, as peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, from the faith of God's elect. The degree of Christian consolation may be greater or less, according to the strength and influence of faith. At one time the believer may have an inward peace and tranquillity which is exceedingly agreeable. At another time he may be favoured with what St. Paul calls joy unspeakable and full of glory. At another, guilt may rob him of his comfort, and separate between him and his God. Such are his exercises in the present state of things. But he is far from making a righteousness of his frames, feelings, or experiences. The distinction between these he well understands. The righteousness by which he expects to be justified is the work of Christ alone; the faith by which he is enabled to receive it is of the operation of God; the consolations that he enjoys are from this glorious Christ, in believing, or through faith. *Stillman.*

The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good state, but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own safe state; it seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good state.

President Edwards.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

From a Christian Minister in Georgia, to one of his friends in Boston, dated March 4, 1809.

"ALTHOUGH I have not obtained that relief from a throne of grace for which I have sought with much labour and pain, (but I apprehend with little faith) yet I have not been without crumbs, and glimpses of light. In this state, I have been tempted to apply more closely to books than was prudent. Though I have gained from them some light which I hope will be profitable to my soul, yet I have obtained but little comfort from the very experienced and enlightened authors which I have read. An impression has in consequence been made on my mind, which I trust will be of extensive and permanent benefit. It is, that I have too much neglected the Bible, and been too dependent on the labours of others. It has determined me to make the Bible my principal study, and to resort to other books for occasional reading. The reverse has been too much my practice, though I have always read other religious writers with the Bible at hand, that I might examine and compare their references."

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

WE have been favoured with a pleasing account of a revival of religion in Hampden and the vicinity, in the District of Maine. Our esteemed correspondent in that place, who has several times forwarded us intelligence, writes under date of May 4th, that several persons who have heretofore uniformly opposed believers' baptism, have very recently submitted to the ordinance as practised and delivered by Christ and his apostles. Thirty have been baptized, and added to one church only. Their change of sentiments they ascribe to a more diligent examination of the *scriptures*.

TO OUR READERS.

WE have seen a work purporting to be an improved version of the New Testament, &c. just published by William Wells, Boston. We hesitate not a moment to declare it a mutilation of the word of God; and we warn our readers to beware how they facilitate the circulation of a book (the Bible we cannot call it) calculated to extirpate the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and to degrade its divine Author. A review of this *version* in our next.